

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as indicated.

1. (Currently amended) A recording/reproducing head to read from a plurality of tracks on magnetic tape while compensating for shrinkage or expansion of the magnetic tape, the recording/reproducing head comprising:

a leading module comprising a plurality of leading read elements located at spaced intervals along the length of the leading module;

a trailing module comprising a plurality of trailing read elements located at spaced intervals along the length of the trailing module; and

the trailing module being offset with respect to the leading module, such that:

selected leading read elements are substantially aligned with and read first selected tracks from the plurality of tracks, and

selected trailing read elements are concurrently substantially aligned with and read second selected tracks from the plurality of tracks that are distinct from the first selected tracks.

2. (Currently amended) The recording/reproducing head of claim 1, wherein the trailing module is fixed with respect to the leading module.

3. (Currently amended) The recording/reproducing head of claim 2, wherein the trailing module is rigidly attached to the leading~~trailing~~ module.

4. (Currently amended) The recording/reproducing head of claim 1, wherein the trailing module is substantially identical to the leading module.

5. (Currently amended) The recording/reproducing head of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of leading write elements, on the leading module, and a plurality of trailing write elements, on the trailing module.

6. (Currently amended) The recording/reproducing head of claim 1, further comprising a plurality of servos configured to substantially align selected leading and trailing read elements with the plurality of tracks.

7. (Currently amended) The recording/reproducing head of claim 6, wherein the plurality of servos align the selected leading and trailing read/~~I/O~~ elements using servo tracks on the magnetic tape.

8. (Currently amended) The recording/reproducing head of claim 6, wherein the servos effectively measure the width of the magnetic tape between servo bands on the tape.

9. (Currently amended) The recording/reproducing head of claim 1, further comprising a controller configured to select the selected leading read elements and the selected trailing read elements.

10. (Currently amended) The recording/reproducing head of claim 1, wherein the leading and trailing modules are offset an amount in the range of between 37% and 77% of ~~[[the]]~~a calculated maximum shrinkage and expansion of the magnetic tape.

11. (Currently amended) A method for reading data from a plurality of tracks on magnetic tape while compensating for shrinkage or expansion of the magnetic tape, the method comprising:

providing a leading module comprising a plurality of leading read elements located at spaced intervals along the length of the leading module;

providing a trailing module comprising a plurality of trailing read elements located at spaced intervals along the length of the trailing module;

offsetting the trailing module with respect to the leading module;

aligning selected leading read elements with first selected tracks from the plurality of tracks, wherein the selected leading read elements read the first selected tracks; and

concurrently aligning selected trailing read elements with other second selected tracks from the plurality of tracks that are distinct from the first selected tracks, wherein the selected leading trailing elements read the second selected tracks.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising fixing the trailing module with respect to the leading module.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising rigidly attaching the trailing module to the leading module.

14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the trailing module is substantially identical to the leading module.

15. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising providing a plurality of leading write elements, on the leading module, and a plurality of trailing write elements, on the

trailing module.

16. (Canceled)

17. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising substantially aligning selected leading and trailing read elements with the plurality of tracks using a plurality of servos.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein substantially aligning further comprises aligning the selected leading and trailing read elements using servo tracks on the magnetic tape.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein substantially aligning further comprises effectively measuring, with the servos, the width of the magnetic tape between servo bands on the magnetic tape.

20. (Currently amended) A system for reading data from a plurality of tracks on magnetic tape while compensating for shrinkage or expansion of the magnetic tape, the system comprising:

a magnetic medium including a plurality of data tracks located at spaced intervals along the magnetic medium; and

a data storage device including a recording/reproducing head for reading and writing to and from the data tracks, the recording/reproducing head comprising:

a leading module comprising a plurality of leading read elements located at spaced intervals along the length of the leading module;

a trailing module comprising a plurality of trailing read elements located at spaced intervals along the length of the trailing module; and

the trailing module, being offset with respect to the leading module such that

selected leading read elements align with and read first selected tracks and selected trailing read elements effectively concurrently align with and read second selected tracks that are distinct from the first selected tracks~~the data tracks~~.

21. (Currently amended) A recording/reproducing head to read from a plurality of tracks on magnetic tape while compensating for shrinkage or expansion of the magnetic tape, the recording/reproducing head comprising:

means for providing a plurality of leading read elements, at spaced intervals, in a substantially linear arrangement;

means for providing a plurality of trailing read elements, at spaced intervals, in a substantially linear arrangement; and

means for offsetting the leading read elements with respect to the trailing read elements such that the leading read elements concurrently align with and read first selected tracks and the trailing read elements align with and read second selected tracks that are distinct from the first selected tracks.

22. (Currently amended) A method for reading data from a plurality of tracks on magnetic tape while compensating for shrinkage or expansion of the magnetic tape, the method comprising:

providing a plurality of leading read elements spaced substantially linearly with respect to one another and at predetermined intervals;

providing a plurality of trailing read elements spaced substantially linearly with respect to one another and at predetermined intervals, the spacing of the trailing read elements being substantially equal to the spacing of the leading read elements;

offsetting the leading read elements with respect to the trailing read elements;

reading first selected tracks from the plurality of tracks with selected leading read elements; and

concurrently reading other second selected tracks from the plurality of tracks that are distinct from the first selected tracks with selected trailing read elements.